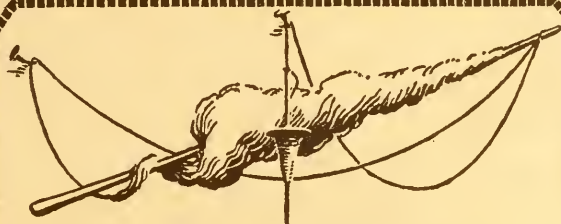


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HOMESPUN

—
Eliza Hoggan Hornbrook



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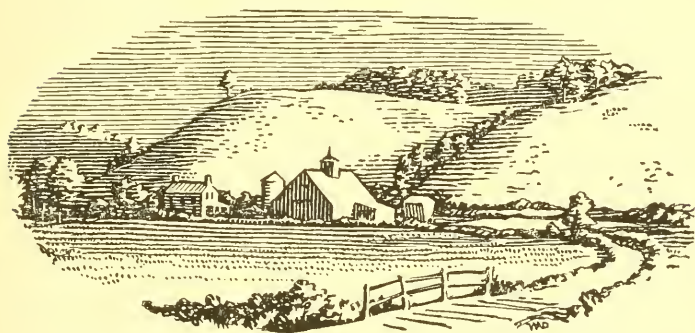
H O M E S P U N

HOMESPUN

Verses by

ELIZA HOGGAN HORN BROOK

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1917

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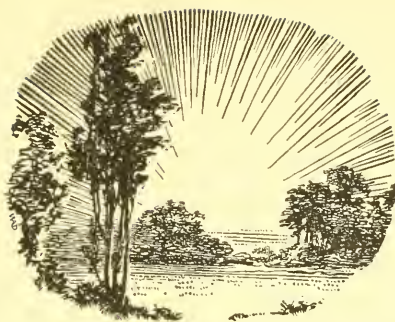
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DAYLIGHT

BROAD daylight! How broad? As broad as creation
It reaches from Heaven to earth;
O'er land and o'er sea, from nation to nation
Of daylight there's never a dearth.

Broad daylight! Glad daylight! We welcome thy coming,
Hill, valley, wide plain and deep sea,
Rejoice at thy greeting; awaken'd from sleeping,
Given life, motion and color by Thee.

HOMESPUN

WHEN THE APPLE TREE BLOOMED

WHEN the apple tree bloomed the children played,
The birds sang high in the sweet scented shade.
The breath of the lilac was on the air
And life and beauty were everywhere;
The children were with me under the tree
And begged for a tale of "It used to be."

Long years ago when the apple tree bloomed
The war-cloud lowered and the cannons boomed;
The plow stood still in the field at home
And the conch was not blown for the men to come.
They had gone one by one from the farm-house door,
Now the call came loud for thousands more.
You remember those calls of sixty-four?

My brother and I stood under the tree,
Our hearts were sad as sad could be.
In the depths of the orchard the whip-poor-will
Complainingly sung and would not be still.
From the nearby village the fife and drum
Called the young recruits to come.
O, my young boy brother, my heart said, "No!"
But your country called and I let you go.

H O M E S P U N

The months went by and the young apple tree
Was dressed in its pink and white;
The whip-poor-will sung and the old farm house
Stood quiet and lone in the night.
Then they brought him home to mother and me,
My young boy brother, the last of three.
Her face grew wistful and very cold,
The last of her boys and she was old.

I'm thinking now of that peaceful land,
I love to think of the waiting band
Who stand close under the Tree of Life,
And will welcome me home at the close of strife.
When I step on the heavenly strand.

H O M E S P U N

T R A I N S : I

I WENT to the railroad station
In the light of the early morn,
And waited upon the platform
With the eager, impatient throng.
We watched with glad faces, yet anxious,
Lest our waiting might prove in vain;
We longed for the handclasps and embraces
Of friends who would come on the train—
The beautiful incoming train.

We walked to the end of the platform
With steps smooth and even as rhyme,
And joyfully read the chalk message,
No. 40, 6:20 A.M.—On time!
A tremor ran through the assembly,
A startling, a bustle, and then
With the great bell swinging and ringing
Glides into the depot the train—
The beautiful incoming train.

Gone now is the past with its shadows,
Forgotten each heartache and care;
In the joy of the greeting, in the completeness of meeting,
Only love and glad hope have a share.

H O M E S P U N

And then we walked home through the sunlight,
Our hearts beating love's glad refrain,
As I looked in the face of the dear one
Who arrived on the incoming train.

T R A I N S : I I

Again I went to the station;
It was midnight, cheerless and cold,
And the faces of those on the platform
Looked wonderfully haggard and old.
The air seemed oppressive and heavy,
My heart-beats were muffled with pain,
The parting I dreaded was certain,
For there on the track stood the train—
The merciless outgoing train.

The trucks hurry by with the baggage,
The curbed engine impatiently yields;
Click! Tap! rings out in the stillness,
'Tis the trainman testing the wheels.
I hold the clasped hand yet tighter
And press it again and again;
All 'board, shouts the conductor,
As he stands by the steps of his train—
The merciless outgoing train.

H O M E S P U N

I meant to be brave and undaunted,
I knew that the parting must come ;
But I quiver and pale in my anguish,
The soul-cry is piteous—lips are dumb.
Our life-paths now are divided,
I stand all alone in the rain
While I watch through the mist and the distance,
The dim lights and the smoke of the train—
The merciless outgoing train.

H O M E S P U N

A R A R E O L D S T R E E T

SOMETIMES when I stand on the portico,
And look down the street between the rows
Of tall old trees with branches wide
That reach across from side to side,
I see people and things that no one can see
Save only my own sad heart and me.
The present fades and years ago
Come back again, with rhythm and song.
They sing to my soul. Ah me! Ah me!
There's nothing so fair as it used to be.

I see little children playing there,
A dark-haired lass and a maiden fair;
But loveliest of all is my baby Claire.
They have twined her a wreath of the dandelions yellow,
How the sunlight shimmers, golden and mellow!
Now, with a shout they run to meet
The father who is coming up the street.
How handsome he is! Now he sees me,
And waves his hand just as it used to be.

And now while I'm looking down the street
Where the gnarled old branches cross and meet,

HOMESPUN

I see school-girls coming with satchels wide,
And lovers walking side by side
In the moonlight. Now happy and gay
A picnic party is starting away.

Now I see through a mist, it cannot be tears,
I've surely grown used to it all in these years.
Three bridal parties, one with carriages and flowers,
And maids and ushers. The sweet brides are ours.
My three little girls, who day by day,
Grew away from their dolls and childish play.

A letter which came to me to-day.
From a western town, has this to say;
Earl will be married his next birthday.
And now, Mamma dear, if you'll only come,
There'll be nothing lacking in our far off home.
How strange it all seems! Beyond compare
The young bridegroom's mother is my baby Claire.

To-day is the wedding day — I could not go;
My limbs are unsteady and my feet walk slow.
Besides I expect the girls' father to come;
I'll go back with him to our permanent home.
I think I'll sit down and be real still,
I feel tired, like I had walked a long way, up a hill.
When they find me here I hope they'll know,
How glad and eager I was to go.

HOMESPUN

A CALIFORNIA GARDEN

I KNOW a place where lavender grows,
The garden is wondrously fair;
Near by is a hedge of the Cherokee rose
Mixed with honey-suckle most rare.
And the fair white rose and roses red
Hang and bloom from the cottage roof overhead.

Close by the lavender are poppies tall,
And blackberries hang from the vine on the wall;
Dear little daisies and violets sweet
Make a flowery carpet for lingering feet,
The fox-glove nods and holly-hocks high
Look up to the blue California sky.

HOMESPUN

THE WEE CULPRIT

THERE are cracker crumbs on my carpet,
Toys litter my library floor;
The "Campbell kids" on the stair-case,
An engine in my front door.

The trail leads me into the pantry
Where the sugar jar, overturned, lies,
And on through the wide, roomy kitchen:
The screen door stands open to flies.

The dining room has been invaded,
Teddy bear sits in the high chair;
While straight from a key in the sideboard
Hangs Barbara's doll by the hair.

I go 'cross the porch to the garden
Where the shadows lie cooling and deep,
And there in his bonny red wagon
I find the small culprit asleep.

And now do I waken him roughly?
And speak to him harshly? Not so.
I tenderly kiss the white forehead
For I'm a grandmother, you know.

HOMESPUN

THE FROST KING

I HAVE been watching the Frost-King day by day
As he worked in his slow and patient way;
While I listened intent I heard him say
Words to the birds, the earth and the trees,
The late Fall flowers and the vines which cling;
O, the wonderfully sly, but the kind old king,
The Frost-King who reigns when the Autumn winds sing.

'Mid the chatter and chirp of birds at morn,
I heard him bluster—"You must be gone.
I do not intend to do you ill,
But my breath is cold and you'll feel its chill."
Soon I heard the flutter of each tiny wing,
They were hurrying southward away from the king,
The Frost-King who reigns when the Autumn winds sing.

He bent him low o'er the listening earth,
And whispered, "You are tired, while the roots you embrace
Have stopped their growing and are very still;
Your green robes are brown over valley and hill.
You need rest, Mother Earth, now go to sleep, go!"
Then he laid over her tenderly a blanket of snow.
"She'll waken refreshed in the smiles of Spring,"
And he laughed as he said it, the kind old king,
The Frost-King who reigns when the autumn winds sing.

H O M E S P U N

The sentinel tree from his crimson tower
Sent a warning cry to the floral bower,
To the stately dahlia and canna tall,
The salvia gay, and the vine on the wall.
“Would I could spare,” the king murmured low,
“But this is the way all things must go.
Death follows life; Summer, Winter must bring,”
And he sighed as he said it, the kind old king,
The Frost-King who reigns when the Autumn winds sing.



MY sister and I walk the very same road
And each of us carries a bothersome load.
Whether we sing or the songs we smother
Depends on how we help one another.

HOMESPUN

UNDER THE SNOW

UNDER the snow our darling lies,
Our precious one; whose sparkling eyes
And winsome ways, and pattering feet
Made life's happiness complete.
Darkened now is our home, our sad tears flow,
For our beautiful child lies under the snow.

Under the snow, how cold it seems!
'Twere easier to say, "Thy will be done,"
When glad earth smiled in summer's beams
And flowers bloomed 'neath the warm bright sun,
Just the beautiful form, but we loved it so,
Under the snow, Oh, under the snow!

But, under the snow the flowers spring,
'Neath sunny skies the birds will sing.
So this thought comforts me where'er I go,
In the dawning light of eternity's glow,
My beautiful sleeper shall waken I know
From under the snow, under the snow.

HOMESPUN

THE CHRISTMAS TREE

THE wind started out for a frolic high
From his dark cloud home in the western sky,
And scurried across the plain.
When he reached the top of a huge pine tree,
He tossed its branches about with glee
Till the brown cones fell like rain.

One fell in the loamy earth so warm,
There quiet and safe from wind and storm,
Lay the embryo Christmas tree.
And Nature, the grand, kind nurse so old,
Cared for, and tended it time untold
As it grew and was fair to see.

The mistletoe and holly shone bright
Entwined in the chandelier's soft light,
And the house was full of cheer.
The Christmas tree stood in the spacious hall,
Its laden branches were wide and tall,
Its lights all brilliant and clear.

The children came hurrying down the stair,
The children three, so happy and fair,

H O M E S P U N

And they shouted and danced with glee.
Then hand in hand with eyes upraised,
They sang their blithesome song of praise
Around the Christmas tree.

“Oh, the wonderful, wonderful, wonderful tree,
The happy children rejoice to see.
Spreading its branches from year to year
It grew in the forest to blossom here,
Oh! the wonderful, wonderful tree.

“Oh! the glorious Christ child who came from above,
We children now give him our praise and our love.
To the babe in the manger, to Judea’s king,
Our worship, our praises, we joyfully bring,
Dear Jesus: whom all children love.”

The childish voices grew soft and low,
The room seemed filled with Heaven’s own glow,
And we felt our redeemed ones near.
The angelic chorus we heard again,
Of “Peace on Earth, Good Will to Men,”
And we praised His name for Bethlehem
On this holiest day of the year.

CALENDARS : OLD AND NEW

SITTING beside the casement
On this darkening winter day
While twilight wrapped in her misty veil
Is sobbing her life away:
Watching the steel-gray clouds as they hide
The light of the stars one by one
I'm thinking of all a year could do,
Of all that a year has done.

I've taken down the calendar
Shorn of its leaves and old
It belongs to the past, 'tis useless now
The tale of its life is told.
The past and the present are blending,
The future near appears
I cling to the year so soon to go
Looking back through a mist of tears.

I've placed instead of the calendar old
One that is clean and new
Its leaves unturned, its thoughts untold
Will it like the old be true?

H O M E S P U N

I stand at the threshold of the year
Impatient to tread its ways
To take up the burdens waiting there
And unroll its scroll of days.

I turn again to the casement
The moon comes over the hill
Stars shine from out the fleecy clouds
The winds of the night are still.
The house is bright with holly
And glad young voices sing.
Hope holds me close in her warm embrace
And the bells of the New Year ring.

HOMESPUN

GOOD NIGHT

THE day is done. Night shadows rest
In valley deep: on hill top crest.
There's a slumber song in the soft starlight,
I'm glad you are my guest tonight.

The glad days come — the sad days go
Filled with summer's sunshine or winter's snow.
We welcome them all be they good or ill
Secure in that love which keeps us still.

Duty and work, love and friendship true,
Make a well filled life for me and you.
Turn out the light! may sleep come soon
As you peacefully rest in my best spare room.

HOMESPUN

I'LL STAY WHERE YOU'VE PUT ME

I'LL stay where you've put me, I will, dear Lord,
Though I wanted so badly to go;
I was eager to march with "the rank and file,"
Yes, I wanted to lead them, you know.
I planned to keep step to the music loud,
To cheer when the banner unfurled,
To stand in the midst of the fight straight and proud
When the enemy's darts were hurled,
But I'll stay where you've put me.

I'll stay where you've put me, I'll work, dear Lord,
Though the field be narrow and small,
And the ground be fallow, and the stones lie thick,
And there seems no life at all.
The field is thine own, only give me the seed,
I'll sow it with never a fear;
I'll till the dry soil while I wait for the rain,
And rejoice when the green blades appear;
I'll work where you've put me.

I'll stay where you've put me, I will, dear Lord;
I'll bear the day's burden and heat,
Always trusting Thee fully; when even has come

HOMESPUN

I'll lay heavy sheaves at Thy feet.
And, then, when my earth work is ended and done,
In the light of eternity's glow,
Life's record all closed, I surely shall find
It was better to stay than to go;
I'll stay where you've put me.

AFTER A WHILE

EVERY life has its after-a-while:
'Tis not far away but near.
We warm in its sunshine,
How peaceful it seems,
The realization blends in with our dreams,
And we know neither doubting or fear.

HOMESPUN

THE BELLS OF HEAVEN

THE bells of Heaven rang soft and low
But glad was their muffled chime;
For one of earth's pilgrims was almost home,
She was nearing Time's border line.
And the ministering angels stood waiting near
Each eager to go on a mission so dear.

Then He who knows our human frame
Sent the one she loved the best
To carry the ransomed spirit home
To its haven of perfect rest.
The bells of Heaven rang clear and strong
As they mingled with our redeemed one's song.

We stood that day in the flower-filled room
Our eyes with weeping dim,
We dreamily heard the minister pray
And the beautiful funeral hymn.
In the quiet and hush when the time had come
They carried our loved one out of the home,
But in Heaven the bells pealed loud and long,
They rang a coronation song.

“ACCORDING TO YOUR FAITH”

WE went with them down to the farthest shore,
We kept tight hold of the dear ones' hand
'Till the loving Jesus unloosed the clasp
As the boat swung out away from the land.

So we blindly thought; but soon to faith's sight
The shadows grew luminous, the darkness light.
We saw no boat, no dividing river,
But the near-by gates of the Great Forever;
And as we listened, through the portals that gleamed,
There floated the song of our blessed redeemed.
In that holy hour the knowledge was given
That 'tis only a span from Earth to Heaven.

Sometimes in moments of great loneliness
We feel their soft touch like a zephyr caress;
Their presence surrounds, we are sure they are near,
We know that they know; with our spirits we hear;
We're strangely sustained, and upheld day by day;
Oh, the angels who minister—our blest ones for aye,
They do not forget us, but with invisible chain
They draw us to Heaven and to themselves again.

H O M E S P U N

Then why do we falter, and doubt, and weep?
Why do we say they are fallen asleep?
Death is not a sleep, an unconscious slumber,
But leaving what doth the spirit encumber;
'Tis just stepping over the borders of time
To the home of the ransomed, God's smile-lighted clime:
Our earth-toil all ended, mistakes all forgiven,
Fore'er with the Lord! Hallelujah! 'tis Heaven!

HOMESPUN

THANKSGIVING EVE

VERY swift are the feet of the pilgrim years
As they pass with hurried tread;
They bring to us shadows, they bring to us joy,
Life's cup with blessings pressed full—Ah me!
All mixed with pain's alloy.
'Tis Thanksgiving eve, and the quiet room
Seems full of the shadowy past,
The old clock ticks; it will strike ten soon,
Hark! Was that only the swift wind's blast?
The present fades and the years ago
Come back again to me.
They clamor, and listen to them I will,
They talk of the past and will not be still.
I'll take the pictures from memory's walls
And hang them about the room,
In this old home room, the parlor of then,
It's seen many a bride and groom.
Hark! List! Was that the tempest's blast
As in anger its fury tells?
No! No! I listen, I know it well,
'Tis the chime of memory's bells.
And they ring, and they ring, and they chime to me
Of the scenes in the past afar,
I look with wonder and pleasure too—
How plain the pictures are!

H O M E S P U N

A light shines out from this large picture here,
'Tis the sheen of the wheat fields golden and clear,
The cradles swing true with a rhythm sweet,
While the grain falls heavy at the cradler's feet.
The binders follow with straw-twisted locks,
Very swiftly the sheaves are piled into shocks.
Then they sit themselves down in the sycamore shade,
And wait for the coming of a little maid.
With basket and pail she walks round through the bunch,
And smiling, hands out the four o'clock lunch.
As she walks back up the bank with basket and pail,
A loud halloo, and with dipping sail
A boat dashes into the willow-fringed shore.
They are off, and away — we shall see them no more.
They sail on and on till the evening hours;
Why think of the thorns that are hid by the flowers?
Oh! the voyage of life had never a fail
If the curly-haired lover had held the sail.
I caress this picture with loving pat
And smile with the boy who wears no hat.

This next picture is bright with a glistening glow
Reflected from Thanksgiving snow.
Do you see the boy with the knit wool cap,
As he kneels beside his rabbit trap?
His shoes are tied with leather strings,
His pockets bulge out with many things,
His jacket is made of home-spun blue,
But his face is manly, his eyes are true.

H O M E S P U N

His sister stands near, 'tis very cold,
Her hands are wrapped in her apron old,
She watches her brother as with cheerful shout,
And no gentle hand, he pulls bunny out.
Then hand in hand, with faces gay,
They hurry along their homeward way.

This next is a school-house square and white,
The yard is bare, the sun is bright.
We will hurry inside, 'tis always the rule
To have a last day at the country school.
The teacher's desk stands on a platform low,
On either side, benches placed in a row;
Near by on a stool the water bucket stands
With dipper—oft passed by willing hands.
A Burnside stove in the center aisle,
The parents wait happy with expectant smile.
The bell is jingled to stop the din
As trustees and preacher are ushered in.
Recitations and essays and cheerful song
The minutes and hours fast hurry along.
The parents all think them "hard to beat,"
And with hearty good will spread out the treat.
With hopes for the future young hearts are rife,
'Tis the starting point in one earnest life.
Ring memory's bells! Ring out the truth!
The story of a happy youth!

H O M E S P U N

The next one is black with the storm cloud's scowl,
The surf dashes high as the hoarse winds howl;
The light seems hid in the light-house tower;
The old bell-buoy sounds lower and lower.
A ship struggles hard with the breakers rough,
Now back on the crest, then lost in the trough.
Oh! the rocks on that coast were jagged and brown
And they gnashed their teeth as the ship went down.
My Captain father! did you think of me,
When the storm fiends were dragging you into the sea?

Now this is a picture very dear to me,
'Tis a little bit of the changing sea.
The sandy beach washed by returning waves
That murmur low of shell-strewn caves.
Arm in arm two girls walk to and fro,
Their faces are radiant with the afterglow;
It shines on and up the pine hill's slope
And encircles the distant mountain top.
It fades into grey as the moonbeams shine,
The girls still plan their future time.
It's a last tryst by their much loved sea,
When the morrow is gone, both, brides will be.
Fulfilled is one pledge they made each other,
Their children's children call both grandmother.

This next large picture is painted true,
The time is autumn, a farm-house new;

H O M E S P U N

From a high top buggy, with loving pride,
The young farmer lifts his girlish bride.
Arm in arm they come, this bride and groom,
And they laugh as they enter the parlor room.
The windows are hung with venetian blinds,
Chairs covered with tidies of various kinds;
The colonial mantle, note as you pass,
Is bright with a gold-framed looking-glass.
On either end, under a tall glass shade,
Flowers of feather and crewel, the young bride made.
The carpet is wool, color, red and green,
The marble topped table is easily seen;
A photograph album, stereoptican with view,
A family bible all clean and new.
The haircloth sofa is long and low,
Six chairs stand round the wall in a row;
Quite prominent is the big rocking chair,
A what-not stands in the corner there.
An organ — Oh, the glad surprise,
And the love light which comes into the dark brown eyes.
She sits down on the stool and begins to play,
The scene is holy; we'll turn away.
Safe anchored are they, never more to roam,
The music floats out, 'tis "Home Sweet Home."

Another picture; this very room,
'Tis shadowed now by the twilight's gloom.
A young man is keeping his vigil of love
As he lists for a sound from the room above.

H O M E S P U N

The look on his face is awed and mild
When he hears the cry of his first-born child;
Then with face in his hands and muffled sob,
He fervently prays, Thank God! Thank God!

This picture is vocal and full of cheer,
It brings past and present very near.
The room is dressed in Christmas green,
Santa Claus waits behind the screen;
The Christmas tree stands in the corner brown,
Its laden branches are bending down;
The waxen tapers are ready to light,
On the top of the tree is the Christ child bright.
The children wait in the room above,
Each right foot is forward ready to move;
Everything is ready, ring the signal bell,
Down the stairs with haste they come pell mell.
They pause in the door, not a word is spoken,
The family circle is yet unbroken.
Malcolm, the eldest of the band,
Holds baby sister by the hand,
While black-eyed Jean and laughing Sue,
Stand side by side with brother Lew.
Fade every picture from memory's page,
This one goes with me into old age.

The clock strikes twelve, I must away,
Tomorrow is Thanksgiving Day.

H O M E S P U N

Everything is ready I surely know,
My pantry shelves hold many a row
Of pumpkin and apple and the annual mince pie;
Doughnuts and twisters on the shelf so high;
A large plum pudding, and turkey of course,
All stuffed with oysters and with cranberry sauce;
And cooky men, and saucer pies,
Raisin turtles with clove legs and eyes;
An elephant brown whose ears won't flap,
But when I display him small hands will clap;
Then when in my lap the children are curled,
"You're the bestest Grandma in all the world."
In the dining-room the table is laid,
In each upstairs room the beds are made.
On the morning train will come from afar
Jean and her husband in their special car;
Malcomb, the judge, revered of men,
But when he sees me, he's a boy again.
Adown the hill will come a sleigh
With jingling bells and horses grey,
With laughter and shout and merry din,
Sue, James, and their children will bustle in.
A little sadness will be mixed with the joy,
Far over the ocean is my youngest boy.
Father Divine, Thou hast honored me,
He stands face to face with idolatry.
I thank Thee, my Father, for all that has come
Into my life in this old farm home;

H O M E S P U N

For the joys and the blessings and for every ill,
For the faith that has helped me bow to Thy will;
For the child thou gavest and took again,
For those who are grown into women and men,
Keep them safe my Father through all this night,
Till I hold them close in the morning light.



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